

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1555
INFO AMJDH/AMCONGEN HONG KONG 150
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EAIR, TH
SUBJ: CIVAIR: RTG CIVIL AVIATION RELATIONS

REF: (A) BKK 5623; (B) BKK 6860; (C) BKK 7140;

1. IN DISCUSSION APR 26 WITH DR. SRISOOK OF MINISTRY OF
COMMUNICATIONS, FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED ON STATUS OF RTG'S
INCREASINGLY COMPLEX CIVIL AVIATION RELATIONS:

A. RTG DOES NOT PLAN TO TAKE INITIATIVE WITH SRV REGARDING
OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS ON ROUTE AMBER ONE (BKK/HONG KONG).
INSTEAD, RTG WILL AWAIT CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENT ON OVERFLIGHT
FEES BETWEEN SRV AND IATA. FOR RTG, DELAY IS TACTICAL, NOT
MATTER OF SUBSTANCE.

B. RTG STILL HAS NOT RPT NOT RATIFIED AIR AGREEMENT
WITH LAOS, ALTHOUGH THAI AIRWAYS CORP (TAC) IS CONTINUING TO
DISCUSS WITH LAO AVIATION MODALITIES OF GENERAL SALES
AGENCY, HANDLING CHARGES, ETC. RTG INTENDS TO STRING OUT
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THESE DISCUSSIONS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE TAC DOES
NOT IN FACT WISH TO FLY INTO VIENTIANE; AIRLINE AND RTG
OFFICIALS FEAR POSSIBILITY OF SHOTTING INCIDENTS ON
APPROACHES TO AIRFIELD. ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS THAT MOVE-
MENTS OF PASSENGERS AND CARGO TO AND FROM VIENTIANE,
FORMERLY HIGHLY PROFITABLE, HAVE DWINDLED TO POINT THAT
TAC PREFERS TO SERVE VIENTIANE MERELY AS ADJUNCT TO

BANGKOK-UDORN SERVICES. THIS, OF COURSE, PRE-SERVES TAC MONOPOLY BANGKOK/VIENTIANE. THAI ASSUME LAO APPROVAL FOR AMBER ONE OVERFLIGHTS WILL BE GRANTED READILY ONCE IATA REACHES AGREEMENT WITH HANOI.

C. RTG AND UKG REMAIN LOCKED IN BITTER STRUGGLE OVER CAPACITY TO AND THROUGH HONG KONG WHERE UKG HAS REFUSED TO PERMIT THAI INTERNATIONAL TO INCREASE CAPACITY ALLOCATED TO RTG BY UK BY LEFT IDLE BY DEMISE OF AIR SIAM IN JAN. AS RESULT, THAI INTERNATIONAL IS OVERFLYING KONG KONG AND CATHAY PACIFIC IS OVERFLYING BANGKOK ON ALL SERVICES WHICH PROCEED BEYOND THOSE CITIES. BOTH AIRLINES ARE REPORTEDLY SUFFERING HEAVY LOSSES ON ONCE-DAILY TURBAROUND SERVICES EACH AIRLINE IS PERMITTED TO OPERATE BETWEEN BANGKOK AND HONG KONG.

D. CAPACITY WAS ALSO ISSUE IN CIVAIR TALKS IN FEB-MAR IN WHICH UK REJECTED THAI INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION TO MOUNT ONE ADDITIONAL DC-10 SERVICE WEEKLY BANGKOK/LONDON (THAI CURRENTLY OPERATES ONE DC-10 SERVICE AND TWO DC-8 SERVICES ON THIS SECTOR.) BRITISH OFFERED TO PERMIT ENTRY OF EXTRA DC-10 IF THAI WOULD AGREE TO REVENUE POOL. RTG REFUSED, IN PART BECAUSE PEERSONAL ATMOSPHERE HAD BECOME POISONOUS, WITH UK CHAIRMAN ACCUSING RTG OF "SABOTAGING" EFFORTS TO OVERFLY SRV. THAIDEL DENIED THIS CHARGE ANGRILY. (COMMENT: THAI SEE BRITISH PLAYING DEVIOS, DOUBLE GAME IN TAKING HARD LINE WITH RTG. THEY BELIEVE BRITISH AIRWAYS--WHICH THAI CALL "TIRED OLD LADY OF AVIATION"--HOPES TO PREVENT CATHAY PACIFIC FROM OPENING HONG KONG/LONDON SERVICE AND THAT UKG THEREFORE ELECTED TO TOUCH OFF WAR WITH RTG IN ORDER TO FORE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STALL CATHAY PACIFIC'S EXPANSION EFFORTS. THIS MAY BE TOO SINISTER AND CONVOLUTED, BUT IT IS TRUE THAT BRITISH AIRWAYS HAS NOT BEEN HURT IN THIS IMBROGLIO, AND WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE COME UP WITH BETTER EXPLANATION OF WHAT SEEMS ATYPICALLY HEAVY-HANDED ACTION BY BRITISH IN THIS INSTANCE. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS EVIDENCE OF JAUNDICED EYE WITH WHICH THAI NOW REGARD UK CIVAIR AUTHORITIES.)

E. THAI ARE CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH MALAYSIAN CIVAIR OFFICIALS WHO ALLEGEDLY TOLD THAI THAT UK HAS ALSO PLACED OBSTACLES IN WAY OF MAS PLANS TO OPEN DC-10 SERVICE TO LONDON. RTG HAS AUTHORIZED THAI INTERNATIONAL TO SEEK MODUS VIVENDI WITH CATHAY PACIFIC WHICH RTG HOPES THEN TO PRESENT TO UK IN FORMAL CONSULTATIONS. IN THAT REGARD, BRITISH EMBASSY CIVAIR OFFICER SAID LAST WEEK THAT UK CIVAIR AUTHORITIES HAVE SUCH HEAVY NEGOTIATING SCHEDULE WITH US COUNTERPARTS THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO FIND TIME FOR TALKS WITH THAI IN NEXT FOUR-FIVE MONTHS.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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